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Introduction

I have undertaken the task of inquiring into the relation between Communism, Socialism, and the Church; not because I feel especially qualified for the job, but somebody had to do it. The Socialist movement has been burdened long enough with objections which do not apply against Socialism, but which can be made against the Communism of olden times.

There is little originality about the booklet. I lack both time and ability for original research work. Most of the material contained in this little work I have taken from "Die Vorläufer des Neueren Socialismus," a joint work of K. Kautsky, P. Lafargue, Ed. Bernstein and E. Hugo; also "Ursprung des Christenthums," by K. Kautsky.

Unfortunately, these works are not translated into English, but even if this were the case they would only find a limited circulation. However, the aim of this booklet is not to reach the few, but the many. Its purpose is to furnish new weapons to the host of proletarian agitators in shop, field and mine, whose activity and devotion contributes so much to the spread of Socialism among the workers.

OSCAR AMERINGER.

Milwaukee, Feb. 1913.

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THE UTOPIA OF PLATO.

Plato was born in Greece about the year 429 before Christ. He was an idle rich by birth and became a philosopher to pass the time away. "A philosopher," it is said "is a man who tells things that everybody knows in a way that nobody can understand."

Plato was not a thoroughbred philosopher, inasmuch as he would occasionally take sly peeps at real life. What he saw there did not suit him.

Athens, his home, had become the richest state in Greece, by robbing the weaker nations that surrounded it. It would not have been so bad if the Athenians had only robbed the common people. But they were Democrats who believed in equal rights to all with the exception of the aristocrats above and the slaves below them. Consequently, they plundered the rich in the conquered provinces and taxed their own aristocrats for the cost of plundering.

Nevertheless, enough spoils and slaves were brought home by the victorious Athenians as to make even their own rich richer. Slaves took the places of free workers. The free men who did not fight in the armies became slum proletarians—parasites, who used their voting power to relieve the state of its ill-gotten gains. The population became corrupt and nerveless, as always happens with people who do not gain their living by honest labor. Besides this, the many wars robbed Athens of its fighting men. Finally, the still-unconquered nations under the leadership of aristocratic Sparta, combined against the Athenians. The war lasted nearly thirty years and

ended with the utter annihilation of the Athenians. In place of the Democracy came the government of Spartan aristocrats.

It was under such conditions that Plato retired to his philosopher's den and dug a plan out of his head which was to change the reality of sorrow to an Utopia, a blessed land of his dreams. As soon as he had the working model finished, he took it under his coat and rushed to Dionysius, tyrant of Syracuse, and asked him to promote a company to exploit the scheme. Mark you, he did not go to the masses with his scheme, he did not ask them to work out their own salvation. On the contrary, he went to a tyrant and asked him to hand something down to the people; something they themselves did not comprehend or demand.

THE IDEAL STATE.

"Private property," says Plato, "the contrast between rich and poor, leads towards the destruction of the state. A state in which the rich and poor live side by side, is not one state but two states in one. It is a state divided against itself. The rich are too few to carry on wars. At the same time they are afraid to arm the poor, since the latter may become even more dangerous than the enemy. The rich alone cannot fight off an outside foe. Arming the poor is liable to bring about their undoing from a foe in their own mind.

"The poor, the proletarians, are like drones in a bee-hive. But these two-legged drones are not all without stingers. Those without stingers, become beggars. The other kind turns criminal." (We see here that the ancient proletariat is much closer related to the slum proletariat of our own time than to the modern working class.)

What then is the remedy that will remove the antagonism between the two states within the state?

Plato's answer is "Communism." But at the same time he is too much of an aristocrat to demand the abolition of class distinctions. Only the ruling class should relinquish private property and adopt communism. As soon as private property is abolished among the rich, they will become like watchdogs, whose mission is to protect and guide the common people.

But this communism was not to include "the means of production." These should remain the "private" property of the farmers, artisans and traders who use them. The ruling class in Plato's "Ideal State" does not produce. It draws its support from the producers. Its communism is not communism in the means of production but "in the means of consumption."

The ruling class are the protectors of the state. They are carefully selected from among the best and most capable. As the children of these most likely will inherit the noble qualities of their parents, future protectors will be mainly recruited from them. But this should not prevent farmers or artisans who develop noble qualities from being admitted to the protector class.

The nobility in Plato's state does not rest on heredity.

No private property will be permitted among the class of protectors. Neither money, gold, silver or jewelry are tolerated. No one is permitted to draw more from the common fund furnished by the workers than is necessary to keep him in comfort. Even the storing of provisions for longer than one year, is

tabooed. And since it is natural that every man wants to see his wife dressed better than everybody else's wife, and see him own children fare better than everybody else's children, Plato solves this obstacle to true communism by extending communism so as to include women and children. These too, are to be common property.

FREE LOVE.

According to Plato, every woman is to be every man's wife, every man every woman's husband. Therefore, the children will not know their fathers, or the fathers their children. Only women between 20 and 40 years are permitted to bear children for the state. No man can be a father before thirty and after fifty-five. Select men or regents, watch over the pairing and only the fittest are allowed to propagate themselves. Weaklings, or children born outside of the prescribed age limit of their parents, are to be done away with. As soon as possible, infants must be taken from their mothers and placed in special nurseries. Mothers are permitted to visit the nursery, but only for the purpose of stilling the children. Care is to be taken that no mother recognizes her own child.

By such methods, Plato hoped to breed a race of noble men and women, who, removed from the pitfalls and temptations of private property and family life, may devote themselves to serving the state.

THE GOVERNMENT OF WARRIORS AND PHILOSOPHERS.

Plato divides the ruling class into warriors and regents. Only the latter are to govern. The regents

shall be philosophers. Plato fears a government by a warrior nobility as much as he fears government by the people. "Unless the race of philosophers assume mastery, neither state or citizen will see the end of misfortune."

But how shall the philosophers obtain rulership? By taking part in the political struggles of the people? Oh! No! By converting a monarch to their views.

We see now why Plato appealed to the tyrant of Syracuse for the realization of his Utopia. The result was that the philosopher king kicked the philosopher statesman out of his palace. "His fate" says Kautsky, "has been the fate of all Utopians that followed him; that is, those, who endeavored to bring about the regeneration of state and society that bore not within itself the elements of regeneration. There only could hope lay; not in the magnanimous act of some political or financial autocrat, a philosophical king or a philosophical millionaire."

ROME.

We have seen how the Utopia of Plato had its roots in the decay of Athens. Realizing that aristocracy and democracy had too far decayed, to regenerate society he placed his hope on the coming of a savior or a great king. Four centuries later the decay of the Roman Empire produced Christian Communism with its central idea "the salvation of mankind through a Messiah." He too was to be a king.

The wars of Rome had been fought by her citizen soldiers (the small armed freeholders.) Centuries of warring depopulated the rural districts. The place

of the free man on the land was taken by slaves. The legions of yeomen melted away like snow in the sun. Those who escaped the ravages of war sunk down into the slum proletariat of the cities. But the eternal wars, so destructive to the Roman peasantry, proved fruitful sources of slaves. So numerous and cheap had these become that the Roman general, Lucullus, in the first half of the first century, sold many for seventy-five cents per head. The small farm gave way to gigantic estates tilled by thousands of slaves.

Yet, even the expropriation of the small farms did not result in reducing the farmers to paupers. They still possessed the ballot which they used to bleed the rich and the state. The ballot became their only commodity. Like leaches, they fastened themselves on the body politic, and as the slum dwellers of our own cities, their franchise became a source of income for the floatsome and the road to power for the mighty.

Hand in hand with the corruption of the masses went the corruption of the aristocracy. Vice, drunkenness, idleness, etc., reduced the nobility to beastial parasites, who relegated education, art, science, the administration of their estates and even the government to the care of slaves. Caesarism gained supremacy over the Democracy.

With the disappearance of political power vanished the principal income of the proletariat. Slaves furnished the wealth that made the rich richer. But the masses sunk in the abyss of pauperism.

* * *

Still this was not the only social question that troubled Roman society. The dissolution of the class

of free farmers, which led to the despotism of the Caesars, was only the forerunner of the economic decay.

Long before the political bankruptcy, perished Rome's military supremacy. With the free farmers disappeared the militia. Mercenaries took the place of free men. Such an army, strong enough for the support of despotism at home, was no match for the barbarians who threatened the state from the outside. The wars of conquest became wars of defense. Instead of being sources of income, they absorbed the resources of the state.

As the conquered slaves became gradually fewer and finally disappeared altogether, the large slave estates broke down. Attempts to colonize the deserted plantations with city proletarians failed. The cry, "back to the land," fell on deaf ears. Neither force or persecution could induce the masses weaned from the soil, to return to it.

Rotten on top and bottom, Rome passed into political, military, economic and moral bankruptcy. With no class strong enough to save society, the longing for a savior awoke in the heart of the masses.

JERUSALEM.

Palestine had become a Roman province. The Yoke of the foreign conquerors sat galling on the neck of Judea. Over and over again the Jewish masses rose in bloody insurrections against the Roman legions. But no heroism born of desperation, availed against the foreign foe. The war on a large scale degenerated into guerrilla warfare and later into brigandage. Hordes of robbers infested the caves

of Palestine, destroying the remnants of her commerce. The flock of the shepherd, the corn of the farmer, the purse of the traveler and the stock of the merchant, became the prey of brigands.

The temple had been the principal source of income to the Jews of Jerusalem. In it alone dwelled Jehovah, their God. All the other Jewish temples were but places of worship or schools. To Jerusalem wandered pious pilgrims from far and near. With them came offerings in gold and silver. To Jerusalem flowed the temple tax (two double drachmas—forty cents), which every Jew in the world paid once every year. Besides this came the offerings in animals. Formerly the sacrificed ox was eaten by the company of merry donors. The priest only partook of the banquet. Gradually the share of the priests increased while the share of the givers diminished. Finally, the priests consumed the whole ox. Jehovah received the pleasing odor and the pious Jew got the blessing.

What once had been a voluntary gift to Jehovah became a tax for the benefit of the priests. One-tenth of the fruits of the field, as well as the first-born of every "clean" animal, cattle, sheep and goats, went to the Temple. Unclean animals, asses and camels could be redeemed with cash. For the first born son a tax of five shekels flowed into the priestly pockets.

The temple of Jehovah was not only a house of worship, but a conglomeration of slaughter houses, store rooms, magazines, granaries, counting houses and banks. Being thoroughly fortified, it was a favorite depository for the funds of wealthy Jews.

Toward the beginning of the Christian era, the temple had degenerated into a means of exploitation

—an octopus whose tentacles reached into every city, town or hamlet wherever Jews dwelled. With the decline of the Jewish nation, the temple became the only revenue getter of Jerusalem. And over these revenues fought levite, Pharisee and zealot.

The struggle for the possession of the temple assumed the guise of religious wars. Jews were pitted against Jews. Civil war raged in the streets of Jerusalem.

And from the field of carnage rose the cry of Israel for a Savior.

THE MESSIAH.

Little is known of the life of the founder of Christianity. The historians of Rome and Greece do not mention his name. Josephus, a Jewish author, who wrote shortly after the death of Christ, devotes less than a dozen lines to him. And these have been declared forgeries by modern investigators.

If Jesus ever wrote anything, not a scratch has come down to us. His followers were mostly poor ignorant working people. It is safe to presume that none of his disciples were able to write. "It is important here to remember that the sayings of Christ were handed down by oral repetition among Christians for thirty or forty years before they were recorded in our Gospels. But anyone can test for himself the fact that with the best intention of veracity, a message or a story changes a little when it passes from one mind to another, or even when it is repeated often by the same man. Something of his tastes and presuppositions flows into it." Unless we assume an absolute divine prevention of any such

change, we must allow that it is wholly probable that the church which told and retold the sayings of Jesus, insensibly moulded them by its own ideas and hopes." (Walter Rauschenbusch, Professor of Church History in Rochester Theological Seminary.)

But if there is little hope that the teachings and sayings of Christ were correctly recorded, still there is a method by which we may arrive at a fairly accurate understanding of them. Those who followed Jesus sought the realization of his teaching, the Kingdom of God on Earth through "communism." From this it may be safely deducted that Christ was a "communist" who preached and practiced communism.

This has been denied; is still denied by the people who claim to follow Christ.

But if we deny the communism of Christ, if we deny his social teachings, his practical every day bread and butter message, well may we deny his very existence. If it is not true that Christ was a communist, then nothing that is found in the Gospels or the acts of the Apostles, is entitled as trust-worthy.

If the church of medieval times denied this fact in the interests of feudalism, if the church of today denies the same fact in support of capitalism; such a denial does not eliminate the fact. It only proves that the acts and teachings of early Christianity conflicted with the interests of later economic classes from which the younger church derived its income.

DIVIDING UP.

Pauperism, as we have seen, was the social problem of the time. Any movement that brought relief to

the pauperized masses of promised deliverance from the intolerable condition, was bound to grow. Christianity became invincible, not so much on account of its religious teachings, but because it fed the hungry, clothed the naked, sheltered the homeless and provided for the widows and orphans. The hundreds of fraternal orders of our own time flourish for the same reason.

What then were the practical measures adopted by the Christians to combat poverty?

According to Gospel, Christ took up the work of John the Baptist. The latter preached repentance in the wilderness. When the people asked "What does repentance mean? What must we do?" he replied "He that hath two coats let him share with him who has none, and he who hath food, let him do likewise." Here we have "dividing up," pure and simple. And, Jesus, baptized by John, preached likewise. When the rich young man, anxious to be saved, asked what must he do, then Christ said unto him: "Go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor." And this injunction to "divide up" is followed by the parable of the rich man, the camel and needle's eye.

Let the rich divide with the poor. Persuade those who have, to share with those who have not. Sell your lands and houses, you fortunate, and bring the proceeds to the common table that all of us may eat, drink and be merry. "And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

"And all that believed were together, and had all things in common."

"And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men as every man had need."

"And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple and **breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat**, with gladness and singleness of heart."—(Acts II, 42, 44, 45, 46.)

There is no reason to assume that the bread broken on these occasions was a tiny wafer; or that the meat eaten was of a symbolic nature.

Ananias and Sapphira his wife, as a punishment for **refusing to divide up** honestly, fell dead at the feet of the Apostles."—(Acts. V, 1-10.)

Ethically expressed, communism means, "from everyone in accordance with his ability. To everyone in accordance with his needs."

If in the light of the above the following is not communism pure and undefiled, then it is nothing at all:

"And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them aught of things which he possessed was his own. But they had all things in common.—Neither was there any among them that lacked, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the price of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles' feet; and **DISTRIBUTION** was made unto **EVERY MAN ACCORDING** as he had need."—(Acts IV, 32-35.)

Let us now pass on to the fathers of the church and hear their opinions on private property and communism:

"It is not without reason," says Hieronymus, "that the gospel calls earthly riches, unrighteous mammon," since they have their source in injustice, **FOR ONE CANNOT POSSESS THEM EXCEPT THROUGH**

THE RUIN OF OTHERS. It is even a common saying that they who possess them are rich only through their own injustice or the injustice of those whose heirs they are."—(Works of St. Hieronymus, published by Malongues, Paris, 1678).

Proudhon, the anarchist, expressed the same thought when he said "Private property is theft."

Saint Chrysostom was not a follower of Proudhon. He lived fourteen centuries before him. But the spokesmen of the lowly have ever spoken the same language, be they Hebrew prophets, holy fathers or soap boxers.

Says the good Saint:

"For one to use his property only for himself is to rob the poor of it, that is, to **PLAY THE ROBBER** with the property of another, and subject himself to all the penalties which threaten him who steals. What thou mayest keep for thyself is that which is really necessary, the rest belong to the poor. It is his property and not thine."—(St. Chrysostom, Bibliothek der Kirchenväter, Vol. 19, pages 27, 35, 40, 51, and 52.)

And Pope Basil the Great proclaims:

"Art thou not a thief, thou who appropriatest to thyself that which thou hast only received in order to distribute it? If he is called a thief who takes one piece of clothing, can any other name be given to him who, seeing before him a naked man, can clothe him, and yet leaves him naked? The rich have just got into their possession the **COMMUNAL WEALTH** and make of it **PRIVATE PROPERTY.**"—(Sur l'Avarice by Victor Meunier, page 23.)

It was well for St. Gregory that he did not live in New York state. Else his fate might have been the same as that of Father McGlynn who was excommunicated for preaching the single tax theories of Henry George. For the Saint had some decided views on the land question:

St. Gregory said, "The earth is the common property of all men; it is vain for those to think themselves innocent who appropriate to themselves alone the wealth which God gave to all men in common. When they do not share with others what they have received they become man-slayers."—("Des Soins et des Devoirs des Pasteurs," XXI, pages 303 and 304, Lyon, 1682.)

St. Clement makes communism or communistic ownership an article of faith when he says:

"The communal life is a duty for all men. It is injustice which permits one man to say, 'This is mine', another, 'This belong to me.' From this has come inequality among men."

Now, that is a good deal more than any Socialist ever asked.

In conclusion, also hear the father of the church, St. Ambrose.

"God created all things to let every one enjoy them and to make the earth the property of all. NATURE originated COMMUNIST right, and it is force which has produced the rights of property. Since the earth was given to all in common, no one can call himself the owner of what exceeds his natural needs; what is over and above this, he has alienated from society."—(St. Ambrose, Sermon 64 on Luke, Chap. 16.)

One more quotation and we shall rest our case.

"The blessing dwelled among them, because none suffered want; that is, they gave so diligently that no one remained poor. They did not give one part and retain the other for themselves, but gave conscientiously the whole of their property. They abolished inequality and lived in great plentitude, and they did this in the most commendable manner. They dared not to place the gifts in the hands of the needy, neither did they give with snobbish condescension, but laid them at the feet of the Apostles and made them the lords and distributors of their gifts. Whatever was needed was taken from the common fund and not from the private property of individuals. This accomplished that the givers became not lofty."

"Let us picture the System this way: All turn what they have into a common treasury. No one would have to worry, neither rich nor poor. How much money do you think would come together? I assume, (for one cannot be sure about this), if everyone gave his money, his acres, his estates and his buildings, (not to mention slaves, for the early Christians most likely did not have any, as they presumably freed them) a million pounds of gold would come together, or what is quite probable, two or three times as much. Tell me, how many people live in our city (Constantinople)? How many Christians? Are there not a hundred thousand of them? And how many heathens and Jews? How many thousand pounds of gold must come together. And how many poor have we? I believe there are not more than fifty thousand. How much would it take to feed them every day? If they eat at the common table, the cost will not be very high. What then would we do with

our gigantic treasury? Do you believe it ever can be exhausted? And would not God's blessing pour down upon us a thousand fold? Would we not make earth to heaven? If this has been such a brilliant success among two to five thousand (the early Christians) so that none suffered want, how much better would it work with a great multitude? Would not every newcomer add to the total?

"The division of estates creates greater expense and through it poverty. Take a house with husband and wife and ten children. She is engaged in weaving, while he seeks his livelihood on the market place. Will it cost them more to use one house together than if they lived separately? If they lived separately, of course. When the ten sons separate, they will require ten houses, ten tables, ten servants and all other things in proportion. And how do things stand with the mass of slaves? Do we not allow them to eat together at one table to save expenses? Division leads to waste, but concentration brings about saving, on that which exists.

"This is the way they live in convents now and so lived the Saints. Who died of hunger then? Who was not fed plentifully? And yet the people are more afraid of this condition than of a jump into the boundless ocean. Let us make an attempt and boldly tackle the problem. How great would be the blessing we derived! If of yore, when the number of faithful was so small, only two to five thousand, when the whole world was our enemy, when no one encouraged us, our forbearers determinedly went to work, how much more confidence should we have since through the blessing of God, the faithful are everywhere. Who then would want to remain a heathen? I be-

lieve, no one. All would be drawn to us and become attached to us?"

What a splendid argument to make proletarian mouths water. Even our esteemed comrade, August Bebel, in the closing chapter of his justly celebrated book "The Woman Under Socialism" failed to draw a more alluring picture of the state of the future than did Saint Chrysostom, Patriarch of Constantinople in the eleventh of his sermons on the S. P. N. Joanni Chrysostomi opera omnia quae extant. Paris 1859, Ed. Migne. IX, 96 to 98. Acts of the Apostles.

At the time these sermons were preached (the end of the fourth century) Christianity had become respectable. Communism had retired to the convents and Chrysostom, as we see, employed his wonderful eloquence to persuade his followers to return to the practices of early Christendom communism.

It would be highly interesting to pair the utterances of Christ, the Apostles, the Saints, Patriarchs, Bishops and Popes of the early church with utterances on similar subjects, coming from such illustrious ecclesiastics as Archbishop Messmer, Cardinal Ireland, Gibbon and others.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE FAMILY.

If Plato saw in the monogamous family a hindrance to communism in the means of consumption, likewise did the early Christians. But while Plato advocated free love restricted only by considerations for the breeding of healthy children, the early Christians advocated abstinence from marriage.

Free love and celibacy are the two poles of communism. The enmity to the family expressed itself

in every communist movement, ancient and modern.

Knowing the communistic basis of Christianity, we are therefore not at all surprised to find in the utterances of its spokesmen a bitter hostility, if not hate, towards the family.

We read in the Gospel of St. Mark V 31-35. "There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him.

"And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, 'Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee'

"And he answered them, saying: 'Who is my mother, or my brethren?'

"And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said: 'Behold my mothers and my brethren!'"

The same thought is even stronger expressed in the Gospel of St. Luke:

"And he said unto another, 'Follow me.' But he said, 'Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.'

"Jesus said unto them, 'Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.'

"And another also said: 'Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home, at my house.'

"And Jesus said unto him, 'No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.'" (IX 59-62.)

An intense antagonism to the family is found in still another passage by Luke.

"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and his mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and even his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." (XV 26.)

From hostility to the family to hate for woman, the mother of the family, was a natural step. The woman was the root of all evil in the eyes of the Apostles and those who came after them. To them she was something unclean, something to be shunned and feared.

The fear of women even drove some of the early Christians to self-emasculation, as may be gleaned from the following passage: When Christ being asked by his disciples, whether it is good to marry, he answers: "All men cannot receive this saying, save those to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb; and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men; and there be eunuchs which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake." (Matthew 19, 11-12.)

Paul, the greatest among the disciples, wrote to the Corinthians: "It is good for a man not to touch a woman. He that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better." (I Corinthians VII, 1 and 29.)

Tertullian, born 190 A. D., whom Harnack calls "the founder of western Christianity, exclaims: "Woman, thou shalt ever walk in mourning and rags, thy eyes full of tears, present the aspect of repentance to induce forgetfulness of having ruined the human race. Woman, thou art the Gate of Hell."

Hieronymus of Jerome, born 331, who first translated the bible into Latin, at one time secretary of

Pope Damasus, says: "Marriage always is a vice; all that we can do is to excuse and to cleanse it."

Origen, a father of the church, born 185 A. D. author of the "Hexapla" an edition of the Hebrew Bible, declares: "Marriage is something unholy and unclean, a means of sensuality." And in order to resist the temptation, he emasculates himself.

Eusebius, father of Church History, about 315, Bishop of Caesarea, agrees with Hieronymus when he says: (the biblical injunction) "Increase and multiply, no longer fits the times, and does not concern the Christian."

St. Augustinus, born 354, one of the most renowned fathers of the church, teaches: "The celibates will shine in heaven like brilliant stars, while their parents (who brought them forth) are like dark stars."

THE FAILURE OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNISM.

The Christian religion originated as the ethical expression of a social revolution that sought the reorganization of Society on the basis of communism in the means of consumption. The kingdom of God on earth, the millennium, was to the early Christian what the co-operative commonwealth is to the Socialist today. They looked towards the immediate future for the realization of their hopes. "The Kingdom of God is at hand." Christ when asked as to the particular time, answered "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled." (Luke 22, 32.) The same answer is found in the

Gospel of Mark: "Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done." (13, 30.)

The suffering and persecution to be endured by the faithful were to be of short duration. "And you shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; but he that endureth to the end, shall be saved." "But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another, for verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the son of man be come." (St. Mathew 10, 22-23.)

However the promised Kingdom failed to come. Christ, the King of the Jews, was only crowned with the crown of thorns, and he died on the cross of Golgotha.

The hope of immediate deliverance vanished with the death of the master. For a while the faithful consoled themselves with the promise of an early resurrection. But Paul in his first letter to the Thessalonians, already removes the "Kingdom of God on earth" into the air. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel; and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words." (Thessalonians IV, 16-18.) This hope too, came to naught. The Kingdom of God on earth moved further and further into the mystic future. It became more and more spiritualized and finally lost it's earthly garb altogether.

But men must live; must have food, clothing and shelter. The boundless faith and the religious en-

thusiasm of the Christians helped them wonderfully to survive the blows of disappointment. However, even a Saint must eat occasionally. So while the ideal superstructure of the social revolution gradually evolved into a world religion, the man at the bottom sought to shift society on a communistic basis. In this they failed.

FROM SPIRITUAL TO TEMPERAL POWER.

The kernel of the Christian congregation, was the common meal—the communion. While this must have appealed greatly to the hungry proletariat, it offered little attraction to those who commanded more and better food at their own tables. To the poor, the communion meant drink and food. To the well to do, it was only a symbol. As the wealthier element became stronger, the feeding of the poor was separated from the communion, which now was strictly symbolic.

The common meal itself became the soup house of the poor. A charitable institution supported by the wealthier Christians. When Christianity finally became the State Church in the fourth century, the common meal was forced out altogether. The church lost its proletarian character. Democratic communism degenerated into charity towards the "deserving poor." A bureaucracy developed in the Christian community.

In the beginning there existed no officers. Each one preached as the spirit moved him, but the wandering Apostle became more and more in disrepute. The community would still give him food and shelter. But the shelter was for one night only. No more bread

was doled out to him than was necessary to last to the next stopping place. The holy man had to keep on the move.

"Every Apostle that comes to you, shall be received even as the Lord. But he shall not remain with you more than one day; at the utmost, not more than two. If he remains three days, he is a false prophet. When an Apostle departs, he shall receive nothing except enough bread to last him to the next sleeping station. If he demands money, he is a false prophet."

In the place of the wandering Apostle stepped the prophet. The latter, a resident member of the community, was not a beggar, but received a stipulated income for preaching. Thus arose a priest class.

With the coming of wealthier classes, there naturally arose a desire for an educated ministry, able to teach the new faith in terms more palatable to refined folks. This class of teachers came into existence and competed with the prophets.

Originally the Apostles had superintended the distribution of food at the common table. Later on this work was turned over to Deacons. And still later, after the church accumulated property, the Apostle under the name of Bishop, became the administrator. The Deacons advanced from waiters to managers of church property under the superintendence of the Bishop. Quoted by Harnack in *Die Lehre der zwölf Apostel*.

In this manner a powerful administrative machine evolved that held and controlled the ever growing property of the church.

In the early days the Christians, who stood in violent opposition to the existing state, refused to take

their internal quarrels before worldly tribunals. Whatever difficulties arose were settled by Judges selected by themselves. Out of this grew a new judiciary, new courts and legal institutions.

The church became a tremendous bureaucratic machine controlling religion, education, the administration of Justice and the management of vast estates. And the hand that manipulated the machine was the hand that held the purse string. The Bishop as the chief custodian and administrator of the church property, paid the wages of the bureaucracy. In possession of the economic power, it was not long before the Bishop became the head of the Christian community. Eventually the Bishop of Rome, head of the richest and consequently the most influential congregation, became Pope.

But long before that the masses had lost every vestige of control over the church bureaucracy. The community was deprived of the right to elect its officers. The clergy was appointed by the Bishop and the Bishop was elected by the clergy. The servants of the Lord became the masters of the faithful. Church property ceased to be the common property of the congregation. It became the private property of the clergy, organized into a bureaucratic corporation. Thus democratic communism, taking its starting point from the carpenter of Nazareth, ended with the absolutism of a gigantic ecclesiastical corporation that employed its spiritual and economic power to oppress and exploit the masses.

The church which Emperor Constantin eventually accepted as the State church, that is, the spiritual side-partner of the monarchy was not the church founded by the rebellious fishermen of Galilee and the

proletarians of Jerusalem. It was a new world power, without which even the Emperors could no longer rule.

MONASTIC COMMUNISM.

When the church became state church and the most powerful tool of despotism and exploitation, in history, it looked as if communism had reached its end. But not so.

For the first three centuries Christianity was a city religion. The word pagan, from the Latin *paganus*, with which the Christian designated the non-believers, means "village dwellers." Christian communism failed in the cities because the means of production could only be used individually. It was different when the new faith invaded the rural districts. There communism found a fertile soil.

Production on a large scale had prevailed on the slave estates. As the supply of slaves gave out, this system of production broke down.

In its place arose monastic production. About the time when Christianity was recognized as the state church, the first convents came into existence. Starting first in Egypt, they soon spread over the Christian world.

Monastic production added to the advantages of large scale production, the superiority of free labor. Moreover by combining the common ownership of the means of production with the common ownership of the means of consumption, it gave a solid foundation to communism. The monastic orders were associations of free workers. As brothers and equals, they owned and worked together; that is co-operatively.

All wore the same clothes, ate the same food and dwelled in the same house. The product of their labor flowed in the common treasury. From this each drew his equal share. The strong, the skillful, the energetic received no more than the weak, dull or lazy. Living on the dead level of equality with no other incentive than to serve the common good, the monasteries represented the highest form of production until the coming of capitalism. In the general decay of the old society they became the custodians of the ancient civilization. Art and science took refuge in the monasteries. Under the tender care of communism, they lived and flourished through the turmoil of the migration of the nations and the night of feudalism.

Monastic communism far from dragging its members down to the dead level of mediocracy, preserved for mankind the culture of Rome and Greece. Communism as the sole protector of art, science and learning, is indeed a new role, but such is the lesson of history.

Nevertheless monastic communism could not become the basis of the whole of society. We have already seen that communism in the means of consumption cannot be harmonized with the monogamous family. Plato sought to overcome this antagonism by substituting the family through free love and the common rearing of the children. The monastic orders sought the same result by separating the sexes. Only by accepting celibacy could they maintain the common house and the common table. As brothers in the monasteries, as sisters in the convent, they succeeded admirably in furnishing food and clothing for the bodies and learning for the mind. But there is yet

another hunger—the sex hunger. And on the stilling of this hunger, depends the existence of the human race. A few may deny themselves the joys of wedlock. Religious enthusiasm may be strong enough to overcome sex love for a time—in a few. But the broad masses of humanity must not only eat and drink, but love; else the race will die. In the words of Schiller "Es erhaelt sich das Getriebe Durch Hunger und durch Liebe." Hunger and Love, are the main springs of human life. By stilling the craving of the stomach we live today. By stilling the hunger of love we live in the future.

Celibacy alone made communism workable in the monasteries. But if communism cannot work without celibacy, neither can society exist with celibacy. Monastic communism therefore could only become the condition of a minority. But even in this restricted field, democratic communism ceased.

It must not be forgotten that the Monasteries owned the means of production. The wealth of the monk orders grew rapidly. Whatever the brothers accumulated was never scattered. The order could inherit the property of outsiders. But outsiders could not inherit monastic property. Add to this a superior mode of production, based on co-operative labor, and we have the causes that inevitably send the cloisters on the road to wealth and power.

In the course of time the monastic orders internationally organized, as was the mother church, became as powerful as the latter. And like the church they developed into exploiters and rulers. Even in the monastery itself were brothers who worked and brothers who enjoyed the products. The outsiders, the

serfs who tilled the princely estates of the monks, were as cruelly exploited as the serfs of the worldly rulers.

Monastic communism received its final death blow in the war between Princes and Papacy. That gigantic upheaval, humorously named the great religious reformation, ended by the Princes confiscating the property of the holy church. This included the convents. But while the rulers took the land and buildings of the monastery, another class fell heir to the monastic form of production. Co-operative production, minus co-operative consumption and celibacy, was taken up by the rising capitalist class and brought to perfection. This class and the princes reaped the only benefit of the reformation. To the masses the reformation brought a change of masters.

COMMUNISM DURING THE REFORMATION.

Nobility and clergy constituted the two dominant classes of the time of the Reformation. Each sought to make the robbery of the toilers the exclusive monopoly of his class. Since both taxed the workers to the limit of human endurance, the share of one class could be only enlarged at the expense of the other class. Continued quarrels arose over the division of the spoils. As there was no possibility to squeeze more out of the toilers, they flew at each other's throats.

The culmination of the quarrel between the two exploiters was the Reformation. The latter consisted in two distinct upheavals—the rising of the nobility against the Pope and the rising of the workers against the nobility.

Up to now the Popes had received the Lion share of the plunder. During the reign of Edward the third (14th century) the British parliament complained that the share of the Pope was five times greater than that of the King. This must have hurt the feelings of his majesty. Moreover, other classes, including nobility, merchants and lower clergy, shared the same feeling. Good British pounds should remain at home instead of wandering towards Rome. Besides what right had the Pope to wallow in wealth and luxury? Was he not the representative of him who was born in a stable? Did not the early Christians eschew voluntary poverty? Why should the chief follower of the lowly Nazarine dwell in a palace, wear velvet gowns and sleep on silky couches? Let the Pope return to the poverty, humility and meekness of early Christendom. Let the higher clergy follow his example, thereby becoming Christ-like. Besides it will save money, barrels of money. The sweat-stained blood-daubed sheckels pressed out of the lowly, may then remain at home and go towards the support of poor, but honest nobles, their widows and orphans, not to mention his Majesty the King.

This was the message that John Wycliff preached. The aristocracy listened to the glad tidings and abolished the yearly tax of one thousand pounds paid to the Pope. This was the start. The end came when England's rulers confiscated the entire church property and designated the Archbishop of Canterbury head of the English church.

Unfortunately the teachings of Wycliff produced the opposite effect when taken up by the lower classes. Wycliff was not a communist. His appeal was to the higher nobility. But his declaration of war against

the highest authority, agitated the masses and made them perceptible to new ideas.

THE LOLLARDS.

The nobility had stepped in place of the church of Rome and became the sole exploiter. But the masses did not ask for a change of exploiters. What they wanted was to do away with exploitation. From denying the right of the clergy to rob the nobles, it was only a step to where the exploited workers would deny the right of the nobles to rob them. The rebellion of the nobility found an echo in the risings of the serfs against the nobles.

The nobles had demanded the abolition of church privileges in the name of Christian simplicity. Now the workers demanded the abolition of feudal rights in the name of the Universal Brotherhood of man. The relationship of lord and serf was to give way to Christian equality. This included communism.

"When Adam plowed and Eve span,
Who was then the Gentleman?"

Became the motto of the Lollards or poor brothers, a sect that preached the gospel of Christian liberty, equality and brotherhood.

Its foremost representative was John Ball, a Franciscan Monk. Excommunicated by the Archbishop of Canterbury, he preached mostly on street corners and market places. In one of his sermons, he said: "Dear People, it never will be better in England until everything is common property and when there are neither nobles or serfs. * * * How have they treated us? Why do they keep us in servitude? We are descend-

ents from the same parents, from Adam and Eve. How can the Lords prove that they are better than we? Possibly because we produce what they consume. They are clothed in velvet, silk and furs, while we are dressed in coarse linen. They have wine, spices and cakes. We have oatmeal and water. Their share is idleness in beautiful castles; ours is sorrow and labor, rain and storm in the field, and yet it is our labor from which their luxuries are drawn."

Here was a new song; a song, however, that appealed little to the Christian Lords and Reformers, who had used the Bible so effectively in destroying the overlordship of the Papacy. But if the teachings of John Ball and his Lollard Brothers sounded discordant to the nobility, so much better did they please the serfs.

The Lollards were strongest among the woolen-weavers of the towns. They now combined with the serfs of the country, who even then were organizing to throw off the feudal lords. The Lollards became the leaders in the new movement. This was soon discovered by the nobility and a prosecution of the "Poor Brothers" followed. Many were thrown in jail. Among them John Ball.

On the 10th of June 1381, the peasants rose in numerous places. The most important rising was in Norfolk, the home of the weaving industry and in Kent. The Kentish insurrection was led by Wat Tylor, a veteran of the French wars, and a priest by the name of Jack Straw. The insurgents marched towards London and freed John Ball. Encamping on Black Heath, they demanded the presence of the King. His Majesty on a barge, came down the Themse, but was afraid to land. Next day the insurgents invaded

London. On the 14th of June they killed the Archbishop of Canterbury. The King, now thoroughly cowed, granted the demands of the peasants, and the latter, trusting in the royal word, disbanded.

As soon as the King had collected an army of 40,000 men, he broke his word. Again the peasants rose. It was too late. The insurrection was put down in blood. Over 1,500 of the rebels were executed, among them Jack Straw and John Ball.

After the peasant war, every Lollard was looked upon as traitor. An era of fiendish persecution commenced. Lollards were hunted like wild animals. Those found were burned at the stake. Thus ended another Christian Communist movement.

BOHEMIA.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth century, Bohemia was the California of Europe. One mine alone produced 500,000 pounds of silver per year. Gold was washed in a number of streams. Woolen weaving flourished. But the industries were not in the hands of the natives. It was German capital and German skill that had developed the resources of Bohemia. But the Germans not only developed the country; they also exploited it.

The rich harvest in precious metals, was reaped by foreigners. The Germans not only controlled the industries, but also the government of numerous cities in Bohemia. German judges sat on the benches, German teachers taught in the colleges, German Priests, Abbots and Bishops held the church property. And the church was rich.

The Archbishop of Prague owned seventeen large estates in Bohemia and numerous smaller ones in Moravia and Bavaria. His court competed in royal splendor with that of the king.

With the wealth of Bohemia grew also the exploitation of the Bohemians. King, courtiers, church dignitaries, Pope and German nobles, reaped the golden blessing of the mountains of Bohemia.

The rapid increase in the production of precious metals lowered the purchasing power of money and resulted in rising prices. This made the condition of the exploited masses still worse. The lower native nobility received no share of the wealth produced in the industries. Moreover the splendor and luxury of Bishops and Princes, so lavishly displayed, made them feel their own poverty keener than ever. About that time feudalism was changing into tenantry. The more fortunate tenants took advantage of the poverty of their Lords and acquired their land by purchase. This gradually lowered the income of the nobility. The condition of these small nobles became more aggravating from day to day and they beheld the rich spoils of the foreign exploiters with hungry eyes.

Church, foreigner and exploiter, were synonymous in the eyes of the Bohemian population. The rising that finally broke out was directed against all three. It became a class, race and religious war.

THE HUSSITE MOVEMENT.

The foremost spokesman of the anti-church and anti-German movement was John Huss, a professor in the University of Prague. Huss spread the teach-

ings of Wycliff in Bohemia. The German faculty of the University of Prague thereupon declared him a heretic. In the quarrel that followed, the University fell in the hands of the Bohemians. Huss was elected Rector.

Now the German Archbishop of Prague took a hand in the struggle. Then the Pope lined up with the Archbishop. The gulf between Huss and the church grew apace.

The conflict became fiercer than ever when the Pope in want of money sold indulgences in Prague.

Huss raised the most violent opposition to this sale. He denounced the Pope as a money seeker and anti-Christ. Soon Catholic Germans and Czech Hussites fought in the streets of Prague.

In 1414 the great church council assembled in Constance. Huss who also had come to Constance, failed to convince the holy fathers that Apostolic poverty was enjoined upon the followers of Christ. Christian simplicity had no charm to the Princess of the church. They answered the argument of Huss by burning him at the stake. But Huss was not the Hussite movement, as the exploiters should discover to their sorrow.

Bohemia rose in open rebellion. The lower nobility and the poor native priests took the part of the masses. Against this mighty rising, King and Pope were alike helpless. The defeated King fled and soon died. The Pope witnessed the birth of a new religion in the richest portion of his domain.

Naturally the nobility embraced the new faith and proceeded to avenge the death of Huss by swiping the property of the church. It was a glorious haul. Never

in the history of mankind have new converts reaped a more direct, nor a more generous reward than did the Bohemian nobles. Altars loaded with gold and silver and precious stones, palaces, convents and estates fell in their hands. And in proportion as the booty grew, swelled the religious enthusiasms of the noble converts. But how about the masses?

THE TABORITES.

Now that the common enemy had been repelled, and the "pure word of God" was triumphant, it soon appeared that this Word had a different meaning to different people. The nobles in securing possession of the church property, set to work to exploit their former allies as Lords of the land. But the Bohemian masses had not spilled their blood for the sake of exchanging masters. They now insisted that the "pure word of God" meant communism. On top of this they maintained that the defeat of Pope and Princes was the beginning of the millenium. And in this millenium there was to be neither lord nor serf, **nor mine nor thine.**

To be sure, only the poor held this foolish faith. The nobles by that time had all the millenium they ever expected to get.

In 1419 a number of communist agitators started a settlement on a broad hill overlooking the River Luzine. To this they gave the biblical name Tabor. Communists from Bohemia and Moravia flocked to Tabor. By July 22, 1419, not less than 42,000 had assembled to celebrate the beginning of the millenium.

The meeting was described as a popular festival of religious character, elevating both soul and heart. The

throng of pilgrims marching thitherwards in procession with banners flying, and preceded by the holy sacrament, were festally welcomed by those living on the spot. * * * Every one who came was 'brother' or 'sister,' as all social distinctions were unrecognized. * * * Thus it went until noon. Then came the consumption in **common** of the food brought by the guests, which was divided among them, the want of one being made good by the superabundance of another, for the brothers and sisters of Mount Tabor knew no difference between "**mine and thine.**" Thus runs the description of an eye-witness to the affair.

The idyllic gathering of July 22nd, was to be the last communist picnic of the Taborites. Eight days later the Hussite War broke out. For years to come Tabor was to be the storm center of the communist movement. During this struggle the Taborites became the greatest warriors in Europe. But of this later.

The University of Prague now in the hands of the Bohemian Rulers, made a schedule of seventy-six points in which according to their opinion, Taborite doctrines were heretical. Two of the points contained the germs of democratic communism. The Taborites taught:

"In these days there shall be no king, ruler, or subject on the earth, and all imports and taxes shall cease; no one shall force another to do anything, for all shall be equal brothers and sisters."

"As in the town of Tabor there is no 'mine or thine,' but all is held in common, so shall everything be common to all, and no one own anything for him-

self alone. Whoever does so commits a deadly sin."

Each community therefore had a common box called "coop" to which everyone brought his belongings. The Brothers and Sisters sold all their possessions and laid them at the feet of the comptrollers of their coops. We see the communism of the Taborites assume the same form as that of primitive Christianity. A small branch of the Taborites also practised communism in women. These were called the Adamites. But monogamy has taken too strong a hold of the people as to make the Adamitic cult popular.

The doctrines of equality, brotherhood, democracy and communism, as preached by the Taborites, was too much for the Christian princes and prelates.

Pope Martin V in a Bull of March 1, 1420, called upon United Christendom to wipe out the heretical sect. One plunder-loving crusade after the other was formed to stamp out the heresy of **simon pure Christianity**. The Bohemian nobles, the robbers of the church, driven by necessity, fought on the side of the Taborites. It was their only hope of retaining the church property. However, they were but half hearted allies of the communists.

The five crusades between 1420 and 1431 ended with the defeat of the crusaders. The military fame of the Taborites finally became so great that whole armies would fly panic-stricken at their approach. But the victories of the communists made the position of the nobles in their ranks, intolerable.

Communism gradually dwindled down, as there was little need for it. The Taborites were not slum proletarians like most of the early Christians, but

working people. There were no aristocratic converts who brought their wealth to the community—no paupers to accept charity.

Instead of the division between rich and poor, there came the division between workers and warriors. One group remained at home and labored. The other group took to the field of battle. Sometimes the groups changed position, but one group was continually under arms. There was good cause for this. Gladly would the robbers of the church have made peace with the enemies of the Taborites. But they feared such a peace would deprive them of the plunder stolen from the church.

Meanwhile Pope, Emperor and Princes had been made more pliant by the victories of the Taborites. An agreement was reached by which the Papal church surrendered its claim to the church property stolen by the nobility. When the Bohemian nobles saw there was no danger of losing the loot, they turned their backs on allies and religion and returned to the folds of the Catholic Church.

Deserted by the nobility, the Taborites fought a hopeless struggle against the united foe. Decimated and worn down, they finally resorted to mercenaries to swell their ranks. These too turned over to the enemy. The Battle of Lipan May 30, 1434, ended with the frightful slaughter of the Taborites. Out of 18,000 Taborites, 13,000 were killed. The rest were scattered.

Christian communism was dead in Bohemia.

GERMANY.

By the end of the second half of the fifteenth century, the Papacy had lost the income from nEg-

land and Bohemia. France and Spain too, had thrown off at least part of the Roman burden. This now fell almost exclusively on the German people.

In 1456 Martin Mayer, a native of Heidelberg, wrote a letter to Cardinal Piccolomini, afterwards Pope Pius II. The letter contained the grievance of all Germany. Among other things, Mayer said: "There are thousands of ways in which the Roman See robs us of our gold, as if we were a nation of barbarians. From this, it has come about that our country, once so famed, which by its courage and blood founded the Roman Kingdom and was the King and Queen of the World, is now sunk in poverty, a servile and tribute paying land, and grovelling in the dust, has for long years been bewailing its misery and indigence. Our rulers, however, have at length awakened from the sleep, and have begun to ponder how they can oppose this evil; aye they have resolved to shake off the yoke and regain their old freedom, and the Roman Curia will suffer not a little if the princes carry out what they have in their minds."

The letter contained only a half truth. The German masses indeed were poor, but not so the ruling class. Kings, princes and merchants absorbed the proceeds of mines, industries and commerce. Never had these classes been more prosperous. Nevertheless, rich exploiters are mighty poor subjects for exploitation. The rapid accumulation of wealth only whetted their appetite for more wealth. The richer they grew, the more anxious they became to retain the whole plunder. Enormous sums flowed into Rome year in, year out. Moreover all the lucrative clerical positions in Germany were held by foreign tools of the Pope.

All these good things were lost to the German exploiters.

The land from which the spark flew that kindled the whole world into flame, was Saxony. The mines of this country were even richer than those of Bohemia. Its principal products consisted of silver, gold and copper. And the chief beneficiary of the mining industry was the Elector of Saxony—the richest and most powerful ruler of all Germany.

Martin Luther, who had been a professor in Wittenberg since 1508, became the spokesman and pet of the Prince Elector. In 1517 Tetzel came to Saxony to extort money for the Archbishop of Mayence by the sale of indulgences.

The box in which Tetzel deposited the proceeds from the sale of indulgences, contained the inscription:

"So bald das Geld im Kasten Klingt;
Die Seele in den Himmel springt."

Which freely translated means:

"As soon as the money in the coffer rings
The soul (of the sinner) to heaven springs."

The story of Tetzel's box is too well known to need further elaboration, but what is not so well known is the fact that the key to the box was held by an Agent of Fugger of Augsburg, the Pierpont Morgan of that time. Fugger had paid the campaign expenses of the recently elected Archbishop of Mayence and his agent emptied Tetzel's box every evening and deducted the daily proceeds from the campaign debt

of the Archbishop. What effect this transaction had upon the poor souls about to spring to heaven, is not known.

Luther quarreled with Tetzel, burned the Bull that was sent against him by the Pope and finally went to Worms, where he defended his position before the imperial Diet. Luther easily could afford to defy both Emperor and Pope. He was perfectly safe under the protection of the Elector of Saxony, who then was even more powerful than the Emperor. When eventually the Pope declared the Ban against the Reformer, he simply retired to one of the castles of his protector, where he translated the Bible into German.

But the masses saw not the mailed fist behind Luther. They beheld only the poor monk who, single handed and alone, had defied Pope and Emperor.

After the futile attempt to crush Luther, the communist societies, which had carried on a secret propaganda, plucked up courage. If the truth was so strong that a single monk could defend it before the greatest rulers of Christendom, then all who had a good cause to defend, may do likewise. So they reasoned.

But only the aristocratic reformation of Luther, proved victorious. The democratic opposition was crushed.

THOMAS MUENZER.

In the 16th century, household production for use, slowly gave away to production for barter. The mining population produced minerals and bought food and clothing. The weavers in the cities, now very numerous, produced cloth for money and exchanged

money for food. The timber used in the mining industry gave rise to the trade in lumber. As long as the serfs paid the Lords in labor or in kind, there was little incentive for the Lords to exact more than they could use. But now that the product of the field could be exchanged for money, a commodity of which men can never have too much, the exploitation of the serfs increased. Land rose in value, making it impossible for poor classes to acquire it. Moreover the wool market offered a new income for the nobles, many of whom turned their estates into sheep ranches.

The influx of expropriated serfs swelled by the inmates of the convents, now turned loose, caused the trade guilds in the cities to close their doors to the newcomers. A proletariat came into existence in towns and country, which had little reason to be contented. For over fifty years there had occurred numerous insurrections of this class. Under the stimulus of the Reformation, which destroyed the reverence for church authority, the masses prepared for a still more gigantic revolution—the peasant wars.

The principal spokesman for the democratic movement was Thomas Muenzer.

Muenzer, educated as a Priest, was a man of considerable learning, great organizing ability and unsurpassed enthusiasm. Wandering from city to city, from mining camp to mining camp, preaching in guild halls and churches, street corners and market places, caves and forests, he fired the minds of his hearers with the "Word of God" as he saw it. Muenzer wove weavers, miners and peasants into one organization. In his confession, he set forth the aim of the organization to be: "An alliance against those who persecuted the Gospel." In regard to the Gospel,

he asserts: "It is an article of our creed, and one which we wish to realize, **that all things are in common.**"

When Luther heard of Muenzer's teachings, he urged his banishment. He wrote to the council of Muehlhausen, where Muenzer had gained the upper hand, asking the council to summon the imposter and force him to declare who had authorized him to preach. "If he says that God and his Spirit have sent him, like the Apostles, **then** make him prove it with signs and wonders; but forbid his preachings, for when God would change the natural order of things, he signifies it by all manner of miracle."

Luther himself had never been very much of a hand in the miracle line, but he was exceedingly jealous of Muenzer, who first had given the Masses in German, something of which Luther boasted of being the originator. The great reformer had good ground to fear the communist agitator. The signs of the impending insurrection begun to multiply and Luther, as the spokesman of the aristocratic wing, had no sympathy with the rising of the lower classes.

The antagonism between the Reformer of the princes and the reformer of the masses, is readily seen in a pamphlet issued by Muenzer about that time, and directed against Luther. In it he says: "Nevertheless there comes an eavesdropping gossip—'ah! the sly fellow!—and says that I wished to raise a rebellion, as he had discovered from my missive to the miners. He accuses me of this, but conceals another most discreet matter, to-wit: that I proved to the ruling powers that a whole province had the sword within their grasp, as well as the key for the unlocking, and showed from Daniel VII, Rev. VI and

Romans XIII 1-8, that the rulers are not masters, but servants of the sword. They should not act as pleaseth them (Deut. XVII) but do righteously. It is the greatest abomination on earth that no one will relieve the necessity of the poor. Look ye! Our sovereigns are at the bottom of all usury, thievery and robbery; they take all created things in possession. The fish in the water, birds in the air, the products of the soil—Luthers complete works XIX, p. 236. All must be theirs (Isaiah V). Moreover they proclaim God's command among the poor, and say: 'God hath ordained thou shalt not steal'; but themselves do not follow it. Wherefore they oppress the poor husbandmen and craftsmen and flee and flay all who are in like condition (Micah III). If one of these poor fellows breaks the least jot or tittle of the law, he must hang for it." To all this Dr. Liar (Luther) says: 'Amen.'

The church had acted most wisely when it kept the Bible buried in a strange tongue and made the interpretation of "God's word" the monopoly of priests. Now that the books of books had become accessible to the common people, they selected from it only that which was to their interests. From the New Testament they picked the communism of primitive Christianity. From the prophets of the Old Testament, they borrowed the war-like spirit, the love of democracy and the hate to tyrants. But the militant weavers, miners and peasants shut both eyes to the teaching of meekness, humility and non-resistance found in the Gospels.

The princes had stolen the property of the church in the name of religion. Why then should the masses not do likewise? What was good for the gander was

good for the goose, especially since goose and gander were children of the same father. Muehlhausen which had fallen in the hands of the democratic reformers, was turned into a communist community. The insurgents confiscated the church property, drove out the monks, appropriated the Manor of the Knights of St. John and proceeded to divide up. Of this we are informed by Melancthon, the friend of Luther.

Becherer tells us that : "he (Muenzer) made the community of goods compulsory, from which it resulted that people left their craft work and daily labor, believing that when they had consumed the possessions of the princes and barons, the churches and monasteries, God would further provide." The Muehlhausen Millemium lasted only a few months.

The peasant war had broken out simultaneously in many places. When the princes, catholics as well as protestants, saw the importance of the revolution, they laid their little religious difference on the shelf and fell with united forces upon the rebels. Unfortunately there wasn't sufficient solidarity between the town proletariat, the miners and the peasants. In spite of Muenzer's heroic efforts, they co-operated but lamely with each other. As a result the trained mercenaries of the princes utterly defeated the insurgents. Muenzer who had hastened to the Town of Frankenhausem with a small army and a number of cannons, fell in the hands of the enemy with the surrender of the Garrison. The fate of the defeated rebels is briefly described in a letter which Landgrave Philip of Hesse, wrote the day after the surrender "All males found there were slain and the town given up to pillage." The Christian prince mo-

destly refrains from telling what happened to the females.

Muenzer after being placed on the rack and cruelly tortured was finally executed.

While all this was going on, where was our friend the bold, brave Martin Luther? The great reformer now hastened to lend his pen to the cause of oppression. He, the rebel against Rome, could not find language strong enough to condemn the rebels against the princes.

The "Pure Word of God" which had served such good purpose in robbing the Papacy, was now turned against the starving peasants. In regard to the rebellious toilers, Luther wrote the following edict:

"A rebel is the outlaw of God and Kaiser. Therefore who can and will first slaughter such a man, does right well, since upon such a common rebel every man is alike judge and executioner. Therefore who can, shall here openly or secretly smite, slaughter and stab; and hold that there is nothing more poisonous, more harmful, more devilish than a rebellious man."

In quoting these historical words of Martin Luther, Bouck White, in his "Call of the Carpenter" records the manner in which Martin Luther's command was obeyed: "Thereupon the peasants were racked, flayed, fagoted. Their tongues were torn out by red-hot pinchers. They were subjected to every refinement of agony. Of two of them, handicraftsmen, who were being burnt, the chroniclers record, 'They lived long and cried with all their hearts to God; it was pitiable to hear them.'

The peasant wars ended in a bath of blood and communism was killed forever. No! Not yet.

THE ANABAPTISTS.

The Reformation in Switzerland followed the same course as in Germany. At the outset, the masses made common cause with the upper class against the Papacy. Like Luther in Saxony, so Zwingli in Zurich became the spokesman of the opposition to the Pope. As soon as the common enemy was defeated, the movement split in two parts. The division, as in Germany, was along class lines. Zwingli became the mouthpiece of the aristocratic wing, while the democratic communist element was represented by the Anabaptists. Zwingli's teachings became the state religion. The Anabaptists remained heretics.

But while the Anabaptists agreed on the outward sign of their faith, adult baptism, they were composed of too many divergent classes to agree perfectly on the economic basis. On the whole, it may be stated that the more radical ones followed in the footsteps of primitive Christianity, inasmuch as they endeavored to establish communism. The conservatives contented themselves with the assistance of the needy brethren.

In his *Chronica*, which appeared in 1531, Frank, who knew them thoroughly, says in regard to them: "Some regard themselves alone as holy and pure. Holding themselves aloof from others, they have all things in common; no one calls anything his own, and the possession of any property is a sin.

"Others have all things so far in common that they allow no one among them to suffer want. Not that one can seize another's goods, but in case of necessity the goods of each belong in common to the sufferer; and no one is allowed to hide anything from another, but must keep open house.

"In some places e. g. at Austerlitz in Moravia, they have stewards and a common kitchen-sack, from which each one is given what he is in want of.

"Other Baptists lay no stress on brotherly feeling and community of goods just mentioned. * * * In this sect each works for himself * * *."

Like all communist movements which rested on the basis of communism in the means of consumption, they developed a certain antagonism to marriage.

According to Frank, some taught that no one should live in family life with those of another faith; and many wedlocks were broken up in this way. Others held opposite views.

Some thought it a duty to forsake their family, and after the example of the Apostles (St. Luke XVIII 28-30):

"There was also a sect among them, the members of which wished, together with all things else, to have their wives in common; but they were soon suppressed by the other Brethren * * * and driven out."

Nevertheless the accusation that the Baptists practised free love was quite a common one.

In regard to the state, they advocated the policy of non-participation in government and non-resistance. But denial of infant baptism was an affront to the state church. The very existence of this institution implies that every child is born into the reigning religion.

The Baptists were soon persecuted in Switzerland, Tyrol and Bavaria. Catholics and Protestants tried

to outdo each other in the persecution of the unfortunate sect. Many brethren were executed in the year 1527, but the real chase did not begin until the imperial mandate of January 4th, which imposed the death penalty on all Baptists. After this the miserable people were killed like wild beasts. Some were racked and drawn asunder, some roasted on pillars, torn with red-hot pincers or locked together and burnt. Others were hanged on trees, beheaded with the sword, or thrown into the water. Those who escaped were hunted from one country to another. Like birds of the night, who dared not fly in daytime, they hid in caves and forests. How violent the persecution was, may be judged from the fact that nearly every prominent man in the movement was killed. Over two thousand perished in a short time and Anabaptism was practically exterminated in Southern Germany and Switzerland. Had it not been that a number of the scattered brethren found an asylum in Moravia, the movement would have been wiped out completely.

The strictest communism was the basis of the Moravian Baptists. To possess even the most trifling thing as personal property, was regarded as sin. Whoever joined the Baptists, turned all his belongings over to the comptrollers. Even after the donor left or was expelled, he could not expect to have his property returned.

At the time of the greatest prosperity of the Moravian Baptists, there were seventy communities, called households, scattered over Moravia. Each household contained from 400 to 2,000 members. There was but one kitchen, one bakehouse, one brewhouse, one school, one room for women in child-bed and one nursery.

In every household there was one host or householder, who made all purchases, received all the income and made distribution in accord with the several needs of all in the house.

There is no trace of the community of wives. But the marriage among the Baptists was hardly more than pairing. The gloomy ascetic views, which frowned upon every enjoyment, including dancing and courtship, left little room for individual or sex love. The marriages therefore were usually arranged by the elders, similar to the pairing in Plato's Republic. Indeed it seems as if the Baptists had borrowed several points from the Greek Philosopher. The children, for instance, were taken early from the mother's breast and raised by special nurses in the common nursery. In spite of the absence of mother's love, all students of the Moravian Baptists agree that their children were healthier and better educated than those of other people. Indeed we hear of many complaints that Moravian nurses, teachers and doctors competed the natives of the same profession out of business. In fact, they were found in almost every household of the well-to-do outsiders.

The same high standard was developed in industry. Like the Monasteries, the Baptists enjoyed the advantage of co-operative production on a large scale. This made them dangerous competitors of the trade guilds, which they greatly surpassed. In time this produced a strong antagonism against the Baptists. The desire of the outside craftsmen and traders to get rid of a competitor, was not the least reason why this class eventually joined the persecutors of the Baptists.

Nevertheless, the Moravian Baptists or Huters, as they were mostly called, preserved their communal

existence for nearly a century in the midst of a hostile environment. When they finally fell, it was **not from internal deterioration, but through external force.**

So far the Moravian nobles had been the only friends of the Baptists. This friendship arose from the fact that the skill, thrift and education of the brethren, who mostly managed the estates and industries of the nobility, was a fruitful source of income. At the battle near Weissen Berge (1620) the Moravian nobility was almost annihilated by the forces of the Austrian Emperor. With them fell their proteges, the Huter communities of Moravia.

On the 22nd of February 1622 Cardinal Dietrichstein issued a degree expelling the Baptists from Moravia. This, as was customary, included the confiscation of the property of the heretics. Many Baptists perished in the wanderings during the winter. Others became Catholics, at least in name. A small portion reached Hungaria. Others found an asylum in the American wilderness. But the destruction of the Moravian communities practically put an end to the organization. It never recovered from the blow.

The community of the Huterites in Moravia, is of the greatest importance to the history of Socialism. It followed closely the lines of cloister production. But it added marriage to monastic communism. This was an important step towards modern Socialism.

It would take us too far to follow the story of all the heretic communist sects that arose in opposition to the exploitation of Church and Princes. Space will not even permit us to recount the fall of another wing of the Baptists—those of Muenster. We must content ourself with the brief statement that the

Waldense, Bohemian Brothers, Levellers, Moravians and Mennonites originated in the democratic movement of the Reformation period. In them the oppressed masses found their expression. The goal of all these was the establishment of a communism similar to that of the early Christians. They drew their arguments mostly from the Bible, which was the only book that had any circulation worth speaking of in those days. The interpretation which the working people placed on the Bible, was in violent opposition to the interests of the dominant church, which by that time had not only lost even the faintest resemblance to primitive Christianity, but moreover had developed into a closed corporation of exploiters. This church which Constantine adopted as the side-partner of the Monarchy, sometimes even rose above the state. At other times it constituted the state. The aristocratic reformation put an end to the supremacy of the church and reduced it to the tool of the state. Church and state as means of rulership became so closely interwoven as to make every opposition to the state of the ruling class, of necessity an opposition to the church itself. Hence we find the working people after the Reformation, opposing the Church of Wycliff, Luther and Zwingli, as bitterly as they formerly had opposed the church of Rome.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

The ideal Republic of Plato bears not the remotest resemblance to the society as conceived by modern Socialists. His state was ruled from above, that is, despotically. His communism was the communism of consumption, coupled with the private ownership

of the means of production. With him, the destruction of the family and the common ownership of women was but the logical consequence of the common ownership of all means of consumption, of enjoyment and pleasure.

But the society of the future, as conceived by the modern Socialist, rests on the Democratic management of the commonly owned means of production and the private ownership of the means of consumption. That in such a society there is not the slightest necessity for the common ownership of women, is self-evident, unless we regard women as means of production (a conception that is foreign to the Socialist mind). Our opponents would have to prove that the common ownership of the postal service resulted in free love among the letter carriers before their claim, that communism of women is a consequence of the common ownership of the means of production, is entitled to serious consideration.

Moreover the elements for the regeneration of society on a Socialist basis, are rapidly developing in the womb of the present society. Democracy, universal education and social or co-operative production, have made wonderful strides during the last century. The proletarian of today is not the corrupted slum proletariat of Plato's time, and Christ's, which carried on a parasitical existence by swapping votes for bread. The modern proletariat is not carried by society. Society is carried by it. This class is growing daily in numbers, wisdom, character, organization and solidarity. Far from being only "the grave diggers" of capitalism, the pauperized, degraded vandals of our civilization, they are the sturdy bearers of a higher civilization. Hence we do not look towards king, mil-

lionaire, Moses or Messiah for deliverance, but place our hopes in the majestic unfolding of the fourth estate. The regeneration of society will be the work of the enlightened proletariat.

It is not the purpose of this sketch to furnish an ethical basis for modern Socialism by quoting the teachings of Christ and his communistic following. The fact that the primitive Christians were Communists neither proves the feasibility, desirability or righteousness of Socialism. The modern Socialist movement will win, not on account of its being ethically right, but because it is in harmony with social progress. The inevitable outcome of social production must be social ownership. Christian Communism failed, not because it was ethically or morally wrong, but because it stood in violent contradiction to the prevailing mode of production. How could it but fail? To sell land, houses and goods, and then divide the proceeds among the poor may be an excellent method of combatting poverty temporarily, but it will not lay an economic foundation. The practice of converting the means of production into means of consumption could, if logically carried out, only result in making the non-Christians, possessors of the means on which life is dependent. This would have reduced the Christians to beggars, forced to live from the charity of their enemies. An impossible situation indeed. As a makeshift for bridging the chasm between the breaking up of the slave economy and the rise of feudalism, Christian communism played a role, the importance of which can hardly be over estimated. Asceticism, celibacy, fasting and the renouncing of

the pleasures of life, all tended to make the stock of eatables and clothing go a longer way. The distribution of the wealth of the new convert from the better classes, helped even more. But these things could only last as long as the religious enthusiasm lasted.

Had the early Christians been herders or farmers, they might have looked towards the common ownership of the land as a basis for their communism. But they were city proletarians. And in the cities the private ownership of the means of production prevailed. The artisans and craftsmen of that period owned their own tools. Manufacture on a large scale, still slept in the womb of time. But what good would it do to own something in common that only can be used privately?

Moreover the monogamous family had arisen with private property. This family was not only a method of propagating the race, but also a productive unit. The father worked under his own roof with the help of the older children. The wife reared the young and attended to household duties. They worked together, ate together, slept together. What inducement was there for the family of the actual worker to exchange the privacy of the home with the common house and the common table of the communists? Besides was it not straining human nature to the breaking point, to expect the family to divide the product of its labor with rank outsiders?

If private property in the means of production and common property of the product were irreconcilable contradictions, even more so was the family and the common table. Eating up the proceeds of some-

body else's labor, may appeal to people who will not work or cannot work, but it will not appeal to the producers who in the last instance are the foundation of every society.

The common objection that Socialism would result in free love, the destruction of the family and dividing up, may with some justice be brought against the communism of Plato and that of primitive Christianity. However, modern Socialism does not rest on the common table, the common barrack and the uniformlike garb as found in the cloisters. Based on the common ownership of the means of production and the private ownership of the means of consumption, it has no more use for free love than it has for celibacy.

Common ownership of the means of production, and family life, the private ownership of home clothing, food, furniture, musical instruments, automobiles, etc., are no contradiction. The engineer working at the commonly owned waterworks, may be every bit as good a husband and father as is the motorman on the privately owned street car. The only difference is, that the income of the public servant as a rule, allows him to bring up a happier and healthier family than does the employe of the street car corporation on starvation wages. Poverty and the fear of want are no foundation for love nor family life. Socialism, which aims at the abolition of poverty, would result in a better, purer and happier family than the world has seen so far.

This is recognized by every honest and scientific investigator, including opponents of Socialism, as Dr.

Albert Schaeffle, for instance. But the bulk of our opponents usually do not combine these qualities. When honest, they are not scientific, and when scientific, they lack honesty.

The worst offenders in this line are the clergy of the dominant church organizations of today. Since this class is accredited with an unusual degree of education, we must assume that we are dealing here, not with the lack of knowledge, but with downright dishonesty.

Fortunately the church has lost most of its power. The capitalist class, which developed rapidly after the Reformation, saw in it the chief prop of feudalism and monarchy. The bourgeois revolutions of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, made a fairly clean sweep of the remaining church power. In its struggles against church and state, the capitalist class was forced, in order to strengthen its position, to hand education and the ballot to the working class. These two gifts can never be recalled again. For many years to come, they must remain the chief weapons of the toiling masses.

After the triumph of capitalism, the church, or what was left of her, attached itself to the new master—but not as an equal partner, but as ranger on, sycophant and apologist. It no longer shares in the bulk of the loot, which this class takes from the worker, but must content itself with the crumbs that fall from the table of Dives.

The capitalist class is too well versed in modern science to hold any illusion in regard to religion. Nevertheless, this class will support religious institu-

tions, because it recognizes in them valuable hand-maids in the prolongation of oppression and exploitation. The stately cathedrals and princely donations which American millionaires like Hill, Ryan and Morgan, have presented to the Catholic hierarchy, are not the gifts of pious souls, for Morgan and James J. Hill are not even Catholics. They are the bribe money, the thirty silverlings for which the ecclesiastical corporation agrees to keep the minds and bodies of their proletarian followers in political and economic slavery to the masters of bread.

The proletariat of today, engaged in a world-wide struggle for freedom, has no quarrel with the Christian religion. But the church is not religion. The Hierarchy is not Christianity. Between the Carpenter of Nazareth, the saints and fathers of the Christian religions on the one side and the Archbishops and Cardinals of today, there is a yawning gulf that no amount of blind faith will hide forever.

Religion is a private matter. But the ecclesiastical machine as the sworn enemy of public education and public ownership, cannot be considered as a private institution. An ecclesiastic, who hurls the ban of Rome against people, whose sole crime consists in sending their children to the public school, or one who excommunicates the reader of a certain paper and hurls denunciation and threats of hell fire against the adherent of a political party, cannot fly behind the cloak of private sanctity and denounce his opponents as destroyers of God and religion. Such a man is a public character who has taken a stand on public questions, in which the whole of society is deeply concerned.

The enlightened proletariat will not fight the church as a religious institution. Religious freedom is too precious and has cost too much blood, to be dealt with lightly. But the workers will and must fight an ecclesiastical political machine, which under the cloak of religion, drives the dagger into the heart of a movement whose high historic mission is to bring **"Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men."**

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